

# MATTHEW

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## Lesson 11 w/Answers

## Matthew Chapter 25

We now turn our study to the end of the Olivet discourse, Chapter 25 of Matthew. This chapter will focus on those activities around his second coming, the setting up of his kingdom, and the judgment of the nations.

What an exciting time it will be, as we return with Christ and begin the tasks involved in establishing, and then administering, his earthly kingdom. What will that be like, and what will our role be? Perhaps the Holy Spirit will provide us some insight into these days that lie ahead.

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*Now let's look at Matthew Chapter 25 and answer the following questions:*

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1. Read Matthew 25:1-13. What is the primary message of this parable? (See 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11.)
  - a. ANSWER: Both in Matthew with Jesus' teaching, and in 1 Thessalonians with Paul's teaching, the same message is present. Believers in Christ are to stay alert to the world around them, and not allow their guard to relax or to take their eyes off of the cross. All are to be ready at any time for Christ's return, as no one knows when that will be. There is only one way for followers of Christ to "be awake and sober" in this fallen world, and that is when they are filled with the Holy Spirit—the oil in the lamp in Christ's parable. In the parable, he is referring to the nation of Israel, which is pictured as 10 virgins; five are ready and five are not. During the Tribulation Period, the Jews will be aware that the time of Christ's return is drawing near—144,000 of them will be proclaiming this to the world. Some Jews will believe, while others will either put off the decision, or they will believe that Christ's return will be later and so there is no urgency. Only those whose lamps are filled with oil will be saved and invited to the "Marriage of the Lamb"; i.e., only those who have the Holy Spirit living in them (the oil in the parable). Paul's teaching in 1 Thessalonians is a similar message, but written to the Church. We, too, are to be on the watch for Christ's return, working and praying in the Kingdom each day until he returns. Be on watch, and do not let the ways of this world distract you from Christ's calling in your life. "But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet."
2. Who is being judged in this parable? (and it can't be Christians, since they came back with Christ)
  - a. ANSWER: Clearly it is the Jews and the Nation of Israel whom are being judged. Gentiles and their judgment will be addressed next, but clearly the "just," as Christians, were already judged as they have returned with Christ to live and reign with him.
3. In the parable of the ten virgins, what does the oil for their vessels represent? (For example, see 1 John 2:20,27)
  - a. ANSWER: There are many examples in the Bible of oil representing the Holy Spirit; the passage in 1 John is one of them. All believers, Jew and Gentile, who accept Jesus as their savior are filled with the anointing oil of the Holy Spirit; and so it will be when Jews accept Jesus during the Tribulation Period.
4. What might you think of as examples of the virgins without oil, as mentioned in Matthew 25:11-12?
  - a. ANSWER: These are people who hear the gospel and think that they know when the Messiah is coming, or who the Messiah is. They wrongly believe they already have all that they need for when He returns, and they are caught completely off guard when Jesus returns as the Messiah. These will not be invited, as they will not have the Holy Spirit living in them. Simply saying that you believe that the Messiah is coming is not enough. Further, depending on worldly wisdom and religious practices is not enough either. You must surrender to Jesus, you must accept Him as your Lord and Savior and be filled with the Holy Spirit; those in the parable without oil have not done this.
5. Read Matthew 25:14-30. What is the basic message of this parable?
  - a. ANSWER: The primary lesson here is that we are to be serving the King until He returns. We are not to be lazy, nor are we to ignore our responsibilities as stewards of all that Christ has given us. This lesson also shows us that rewards will be given out to all who are faithful; and those rewards will be proportional to our actions. It also shows us that some will lose their rewards altogether and yet still be saved. I have often heard it said that people don't worry about losing their rewards, just as long as they are in heaven. The thought is: what else matters? But that view completely discounts and dishonors Christ's intention to give great rewards to his faithful servants. Don't think as the world thinks; rather, see your salvation and your work in the Kingdom as something worthy and honorable. Do it to the glory of God.

6. If we believe that the primary lesson here is serving the King while he is away and being held accountable for our actions upon his return; what do the "talents" in this parable actually represent? Do they represent talents, likes gifts or abilities? Do they represent money, wealth, budgets, and how well we managed our money? Or could these "talents" that we have been entrusted with mean something else? If so, what; and how would we make them fruitful or increase, as the Master desired of his servants in this parable?
- a. ANSWER: Clearly, this parable is not simply referring to money and how well we managed it. Yes, we do have a responsibility to be a good steward, but this passage is referring to something broader than simply money. It is not referring to gifts, as in talents or abilities. What then will be the basis for this judgment? I believe that it also refers to the opportunities that we are given, as well as how well we manage or steward all that Christ has given us. No matter whether we have a few abilities or little money, this is about what we do with them. How are advancing the Kingdom of God on a daily basis? If we say that we don't have much, or that we don't have any abilities, gifts, or opportunities for service; then we are like the man with one talent who simply buried it. We know that God has a plan for each of us, an individual plan for each believer's life. Are you living that plan? Do you "seek first the kingdom of God" each day? If you are, then you are being faithful. Not all of us will ever have the opportunities that Billy Graham has for sharing the Gospel. Not all of us will be great teachers or great preachers, but all of us have opportunities to use what little or lot that Christ has given us. We are to make the maximum effort to advance the Kingdom using what God has given us and the opportunities that Christ sets before us. So, let us all strive to be the "good and faithful servant."
7. Following his judgment of the nation of Israel in the beginning of this chapter, and of individual Jews as we just read in the second parable; Christ now turns to the nations outside of Israel, as he separates the sheep from the goats. Every individual alive at the time of his second coming will face this judgment. Some will enter into his millennial reign with him, others will go with Satan and will face the same plight at the Great White Throne judgment following his Millennial reign. What is the basis by which he separates them? (See Matt. 25:34-40.)
- a. ANSWER: Here, at this judgment, Christ will separate all those who helped the Jews during the Tribulation Period from those who persecuted them and refused to help them. Clearly, the Tribulation Period will be a horrible time, particularly the latter half; and most particularly, the period near the end called the Great Tribulation. Jewish persecution, particularly of those believing in Christ's imminent return, will cause great hardship on all followers of Christ. Gentiles who go out of their way to help the Jews will themselves believe in the coming Messiah, and through their works of faith, they will provide help to those being persecuted. In doing so, they will enter Christ's Kingdom as the sheep. The goats, i.e., all of those who either persecuted the believing Jews, or at the least refused to help them in their of need (and who I imagine to be a much larger group), will not enter the Kingdom; but rather will be sent away to "eternal punishment."
8. What is Christ's title, as identified in Matthew 25:34?
- a. ANSWER: He is called the King! Now on his throne and beginning His Millennial Reign of the entire earth, He is seen as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! What a day that will be; and he will rule with a rod of iron.
9. Jesus uses the phrase "one of the least of these my brethren" in Matthew 25:40 and again in verse 45. Who are the "these" that he is referring to, and when did these acts of righteousness or unrighteousness take place?
- a. ANSWER: As mentioned earlier, these are the believing Jews who, during the Tribulation period, accept Christ as the coming Messiah.

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Concluding Chapter 25, Christ has now answered all of the questions that the disciples asked him at the beginning of Chapter 24. With the judgment of the nation and people of Israel, and the judgment of the Gentiles now completed, Christ will establish his millennial reign. All those who have followed him as their Lord and Savior will partake in that kingdom. How strange to believe that at the end of the 1,000 years, in spite of Christ's reign, Satan will once again lead a quick revolt that will lead to the final judgment, destruction of this earth, and the coming of a new heaven and earth.

I hope our study has greatly increased your faith and trust in God and in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. My prayer today is that you already know him as your personal savior and that when he calls for us to go home you will be there with us as we prepare to return and reign with Him.

May God richly bless you as you study His Holy Word.

In Christ,

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